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ABSTRACT

The paper describes development of the Brockton Battery: A Special Needs Assessment for Minority Students, a collection of four independent instruments designed for special education assessment of minority students. Initial sections review demographic information on the city of Brockton, Massachusetts, and on special education in the city. Assessment procedures in Massachusetts differ from those in the rest of the country. Massachusetts does not allow the use of traditional special education labels such as those used for reporting purposes of numbers to the federal government, but instead uses a system of prototyping students by the amount of time each student must be out of the regular education program. The special education assessment process covers referral, assessment and evaluation, placement, annual review, reevaluation of the individual education plan, and monitoring of special education placements of bilingual and minority students. The Brockton Battery contains the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts and the Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration to determine if the child understands the primary concepts necessary for test taking: Tests of Language Abilities (including one receptive language test, one expressive picture naming subtest, a receptive subtest of sentence repetition, and an expressive subtest involving story telling): tests of language development: tests of reading abilities: tests of learning rate and method: and the adaptive behavior scales. (SB)

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Special Needs Assessments

for Linguistic Minority Students

in the Brockton (Mass.) Public School System

CEC CONFERENCE on

THE EXCEPTIONAL BILINGUAL CHILD

February 18-20, 1981

New Orleans, Louisiana

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Introduction

Traditionally the field of Special Education has dealt with deviance. Operationally defined physical symptoms facilitate the identification of certain Special Education youngsters, but the determination of deviance in the areas of mental retardation, learning disabilities and emotional disturbance is open to controversy, mainly due to widely varying definitions and the need to rely upon subjective judgements. Consequently, clear cut criteria to follow when determining the existence or the degree of deviance in these areas is not available. In addition, the current trend toward declassification, normalization and the establishment of non-categorical Special Education services based upon a task analysis of educational needs has allowed bias to creep into the system of Special Education assessment. Whether at the initial point of referral by a classroom teacher, at the intermediate point of testing and evaluation, or the final point of placement within a Special Education classroom, the issue of racial, cultural or linguistic difference being misinterpreted by the teacher, tester or administrator as deviance has become a critical concern of several groups. As stated by the Massachusetts Advocacy Center:

> "In some cases, minority students were over-represented in the special education enrollment, suggesting that

> those schools inappropriately placed minority students in special education programs for problems which, if exhibited by White students, would have been handled within the context of the regular education mainstream. In other cases, minority students were under-represented in the total special education enrollment. This pattern suggests that, because of the school's failure to understand or to provide for cultural and linguistic differences, significant numbers of minority students who may have had special needs simply were not identified and served."

Interdiction by the executive, legislative and judical branches of government presently demand that we give immediate and serious consideration to the development of non-biased assessment processes and procedures which will eliminate bias and discrimination from the entire system of Special Education assessment. Difference can not be accepted automatically as deviance. Educators at all levels must be led to examine their personal attitudes towards difference. On the other hand, actual deviance must not be masked by cultural, racial or linguistic difference.

In the spirit of American education which has always espoused equal educational opportunity despite political and social forces in opposition, the Special Education department of the Brockton, Massachusetts Public Schools is committed to the development of an assessment process which will allow us to judiciously separate difference from deviance.

One part of this process has been the creation of THE BROCKTON BATTERY: A SPECIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR MINORITY STUDENTS. This battery is a collection of four independent instruments meant to be combined into a differential diagnosis. Although still in the infancy of its development, the process is promising enough to shared with a wider, more varied, audience. Before describing the system for special education assessment in our city, some demographic information about Brockton, Massachusetts is in order.

Demographic information

The city of Brockton, Massachusetts is located approximately half way between Boston, twenty-five miles to the north, and the resort areas of Cape Cod to the south. It is interesting to note that, according to a 1980 census study undertaken by a local college, 48% of the total Massachusetts population increase between 1970 and 1980 is attributable to the population increase in the Brockton area. The city is the only major city in the state to have had a population increase during the 1970's and it now ranks sixth largest in the state. The current population is 94,990. Separation of these numbers into racial groups reveals 92.2% of the population to be White, 4.2% of the population to be Black, 1.6% to be Cape Verdean/Portuguese and 1.3% to be Hispanic, mainly Puerto Rican in origin.

When these figures are further separated into groups above and below age 16, statistics more relevant to schools becomes evident. 89.9% of the total school population is white; 5.6% is Black; 2.2% is Hispanic and 2.2% is of Cape Verdean/Portuguese origin.

Economically the city of Brockton suffers many of the same ills seen in all northeastern cities. A steady loss in industrial base over the past twenty-five years (Brockton was once known as the "Shoe Center of the World") and the deterioration of the central core of the city has resulted in an increase in the social and economic problems faced by the schools.

The unemployment rate for Brockton parallels the national average - approximately 6.9%. When unemployment data are broken down into categories and examined by racial, linguistic and cultural groups, we find that 8.6% of White males and 9.6% of White females are unemployed. 13.8% of Black males and 20.4% of Black females are unemployed. 20% of Hispanic males and 30% of Hispanic females are unemployed. Income figures for this same period show that the median income for White workers is $11,570. The median income for Black workers is $8,731; for Cape Verdean workers is $8500; for Hispanic workers is $5,850.

It is interesting to note that the greatest percentage of workers within Brockton's labor force falls within the Service worker and Clerical worker groups. (44.1%) Professional and

Technical workers make up only 14.6% of the occupational population. Correspondingly, approximately 1/3rd of the population has less than a four year High School education; 1/3rd has received a High School diploma and approximately 1/3rd has some education beyond High School. Only 13% of the occupational population has four or more years of college education.

Despite the inclining trend of the general population, the school age population has been slowly declining over the past several years, although not at a rate as fast as some of the surrounding areas. This reflects both a national and regional trend. From a school age population of 21, 156 in 1976, figures for January, 1981, show a total school population of 18,530, or a loss of 2626 students. This decline in school population has mainly affected the elementary schools to this point with a closing of three schools and a correspinding decrease in staff.

Examination of the present school statistics show 949 bilingual students. This is 5.1% of the total. Approximately half this number is located throughout the regular school system; the other half is within our Bilingual program.

Figures relating to racial, cultural and linguistic minority groups are collected by the school systems in two categories: racially and linguistically. 2537 students are classified as belonging to a racial grouping other than White; this is 13.6% of the total school population. Further examination

Crioulo. On the other hand, Portuguese immigrants in areas around Brockton (Fall River, Taunton, New Bedford) speak Portuguese. Whatever the outcome of the language argument is, we, in Brockton, have decided to write the BROCKTON BATTERY in Crioulo as well as in Spanish and Portuguese for to test a child whose parents are Crioulo-speaking and to judge his responses by Portuguese standards would be another case of linguistic discrimination. The number of Cape Verdean students within our school system is 212: 1.2% of the total population.

Brockton Special Education demographics

The above statistics have been offered to provide a background against which our current Special Education figures, processes and procedures can be displayed. Due to the current policies of the Massachusetts State Department of Education and the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, it is important to have a broad understanding of the racial, cultural and linguistic composition of the total city and school system.

There has been a twenty-three per cent growth in Brockton's Special Education population over the past five years. While some of this growth is probably attributable to the shifting population and the availability of cheaper rents in the city, the major reason for growth in the Special Education department is

of these data show that the largest minority grouping is Black: 1542 students, or 8.3% of the total school population. Hispanic students compose the second largest minority grouping with 735 students: this is 3.9% of the total school population. Racial statistics are misleading, however, for the third largest minority group is actually the Cape Verdean students who will not be found in the racial figures for they are not considered a minority group by the Federal government and thus are not counted by the state or local governments.

An explanation now of our Cape Verdean population will save confusion later. The Cape Verde Islands (located about 300 miles from the south western coast of Africa) won their independence from Portugual in 1975. The language of the islands is officially Portuguese but this is actually spoken by the Portuguese oriented managerial classes. The language of the people is Crioulo, a language yet to be codified into a written form. Lexography tends to be similar to Portuguese with syntax bearing striking relationships to some of the African languages. A controversy currently exists with those of western orientation insisting that Crioulo is nothing more than a pidgin Portuguese while those with an African, third-world, orientation, insist that Crioulo is the language of the people. Cape Verdean immigrantion to the United States has been to selective areas, mainly Brockton and Providence, Rhode Island in the east, Ohio in the midwest, and San Diego and Sacramento in the west. There is little doubt that recent immigrants speak

more likely due to an increased awareness of the rights of special needs students by their teachers, their parents and other child advocates. Co-ordinated child search measures and other publicity campaigns led by the Massachusetts State Department of Education have also helped to increase the rolls.

Figures for the 1976-1977 school year (two years after the implementation of Chapter 766) show a total Special Education population in Brockton of 1,555, or 7.4% of the total school population. Figures reported as of January, 1981, show our current numbers to be 2,027, or 10.9% of the total school population. Some state authorities have recently reported in the newspapers that the state of Massachusetts leads the nation in the identification and service of special needs students with a full fifteen percent of the school population thus identified.

Comparisons by race, language or cultural groupings are important in Massachusetts for this is the way that the State Department of Education uncovers prima facie evidence of biased assessment procedures. In Brockton, the Bilingual numbers have risen from 620 students in 1976 to 949 students in 1981 or an increase of approximately one-third. This growth has obviously affected the Special Education department. The largest minority population within the Special Education

figures is the Black population with a total of 8.7% of our population. (Contrasted to a total of 8.3% in the total school population). Hispanics represent 3.7% of the Special Education population (contrasted with 3.9% of the total school population). It is not possible to give separate figures for the Cape Verdean population as, statistically, they are counted as either Black or White.

Non-categorical Special Education services

To completely understand the issues of non-discriminatory assessment procedures in Massachusetts, it is first necessary to understand how Special Education service delivery in Massachusetts differs from the rest of the nation.

The state of Massachusetts does not allow the use of traditional Special Education labels such as those used for reporting purposes of numbers to the Federal government. We use, instead, a system of prototyping students by the amount of time each students must be out of the regular education program. Thus, a child whose regular eduaction classroom program has been modified to meet his individual special needs is classified as a .1 student. A child classified as a .2 student may spend up to 25% of his time out of the regular education classroom. A child who spends between 25% and 60% of his time out of the regular program is called "a point 3." A .4 child receives the greatest majority of his education within a Special Education resource room

or substantially separate Special Education classroom.

In Brockton we have the traditional special education services such as Speech therapy, Occupational therapy, Physical therapy, Adaptive Physical Education, etc. We have substantially separate classes for the physically handicapped, multiply-handicapped and other seriously handicapped youngsters. The largest number of our population receive services through resource rooms - either in their neighborhood schools - or in city-wide resource rooms. The difference is mainly in the amount of service time required by the student - not his handicapping condition. In general, most special education students are kept in their neighborhood schools. The focus of our instruction and of our on-going assessment processes is the degree of skill attainment the child needs in order to be successful within the regular education classroom.

It should be obvious that it is really the student's ability to succeed within the regular classroom program which determines his eligibility for Special Education services. This has placed much of the responsibility for referral upon the classroom teacher and upon the degree of program modification which can be accomplished with the regular education curriculum. State law requires regular classroom programs to be modified <u>before</u> referral. Documentation is required. We have attempted to support the regular education teachers in our school system in several ways. We provide on-going in-service and consultant

services to the regular classroom teachers through Project Mainstream, a federally funded Model Demonstration Project. We are in the process of retraining, also through Project Mainstream, some of our special educators (namely those who work in the neighborhood school resource rooms) to work as teacher consultants. We are now midway through this process and hopefully will be able to report its effectiveness at a later date.

For several years now, especially since the advent of or state law regarding the Education of Handicapped Children - Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972 - and more so with the passage of P.L. 94-142 that the degree to which regular classroom teachers are either willing or able to modify their curriculum and instruction to meet the individual needs of students will directly determine the rate at which students are referred for special education services.

Recent legislation affecting the assessment and placement procedures for minority children has made us even more aware that the degree to which the classroom teacher understands and wants to modify the instruction and curriculum of the regular classroom to meet the unique cultural differences of students, is, likewise, going to affect the rate at which minority children are referred for special services. Advocacy groups have correctly ascertained that when a larger percentage of the local special education population when contrasted to the total minority population is made up of minority groupings, there is something

about the regular education program which is not meeting the needs of all students in the system. What we have discovered is that whether the difference seen by the classroom teacher is racial, economic, cultural or linguistic in nature, it is the teacher's attitude toward difference which really affects the rate at which minority children are referred for special education services.

The Special Education Assessment Process

The process mandated by the State to use in identifying students who may be in the need of Special Education services has been in effect for the past seven years in Massachusetts. Elaborate regulations govern the process through the initial referral, through the assessment and evaluation process, to the point of placement, annual review and re-evaluation of the individual educational plan. Since 1974 when the Massachusetts law regarding the education of handicapped children became state law, the following regulation has been in effect:

> "....wherever the testing of a child is required or permitted by these regulations, the results of standardized or local tests of ability, aptitude, affect, achievement, or aspiration or of projective personality testing shall not be used exclusively or principally as the basis for any finding or conclusion. Such tests shall be as free as possible from cultural or linguistic bias and separately evaluated with reference to the linguistic or cultural groups to which the child belongs..."
>
> (213.0; Chapter 766, Acts of 1972)

The federal law relating to the evaluation of bilingual and minority students for special education services is even more stringent:

> "Tests and other evaluation materials are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so...
>
> (and) have been valida ted for the specific purpose for which they are used...
>
> ...tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to specific areas of educational need and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient...
>
> Information from sources other than ability or achievement tests, including information concerning physical condition, sociocultural background, and adaptive behavior in home and school, is gathered and considered and the weight given to each of these sources is documented...
>
> (20 U.S.C. 1412(5) (C)

Furthermore:

> "Testing and evaluation procedures used for the purposes of evaluation and placement of handicapped children must be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory."
>
> (20 U.S.C. 1412(5) (C)

The process of systematic assessment of student's referred for Special Education services in Brockton contains the following steps:

1. Referrals are brought to a building level Educational Planning Team;

2. Modifications to the regular classroom program are investigated and documented;

3. Students still needing referral are then referred for Special Education TEAM EVALUATION (after appropriate notification to parents and approval obtained):

4. Assessments are conducted according to the perceived disability, but the focus is upon educational assessments and determinations of how the student best "receives, retains, processes and expresses" information.

5. The TEAM EVALUATION is held and a multi-faceted student profile written; objectives for the student's I.E.P. are written and recommendations are made.

6. Placement decisions within Special Education service delivery programs are made by the Administrator of Special Education of his designee.

7. The I.E.P. is formally sent to the parents for their approval.

This process, which requires the involvement of several professionals, satisfies the requirement that the requirements of both state and federal law are met. To the above procedure we have added the following clarifications to the steps when bilingual or minority

students are referred:

1. (At the point of referral) The building level Educational Planning Team is requested to include a bilingual member of the Special Education staff to explain matters of cultural, racial or linguistic difference and to aide in suggesting classroom modifications.

2. At the level of testing, these students should be administered either the BROCKTON BATTERY or other appropriate bilingual tests to determine:

    a. the student's proficiency in his native language as well as in English;

    b. if a difference exists between the student's expressive language and receptive language abilities in both languages;

    c. whether or not the student demonstrates a lack of adaptive behavior in the home or in school;

    d. the appropriateness of his cognitive abilities to learn in English;

    e. how the student best "receives, retains, processes and expresses" information in his native language as well as in English;

    This testing is administered and interpreted, where possible, by a member of the student's own cultural group; where this is not possible, a person fluent in the student's native language and cognizant of the student's culture is used.

3. At the level of TEAM EVALUATION, the appropriate Bilingual Special Education personnel sit on the Team and are ready to interpret the findings in the light of the student's racial, cultural or linguistic identidy. Their major effort is placed in determining whether the symptoms exhibited by the student are actually normal characteristics for the culture of the student involved.

4. It has recently been suggested that a top-level administrative review team be formed to investigate the issue of placement when bilingual or minority students are involved.

Monitoring of Special Education placements.

The Massachusetts State Department of Education has been charged with the responsibility of monitoring compliance of local school systems with the state and federal regulations regarding bilingual and minority students within Special Education. The major vehicle for monitoring compliance is an inspection of each city and town's October 1 report to the state which details numbers in terms of prototype. These data are examined by both the State Department of Education and the Massachusetts Advocacy Center to determine if minority children are either over or underrepresented in any particular prototype. The percentage of minority children within any one prototype is compared with the percentage of White children within the same prototype. Thus, if 70% of White children are serviced within a city's .2 prototype programs, it is expected that 70% of the Black children, 70% of the Hispanic children and 70% of any other minority group reported be also servied through the .2 prototype. A percentage band of two points is allowed before the State Department will issue a finding of prima facie evidence that discrimination exists. This does not mean, necessarily, that discrimination does exist, just that,

on the face of it, before investigation, evidence strongly suggests that there is discrimination.

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71B does not require that overt, intentional discrimination be proven before departmental action is required. The State Department is charged with notifying (or citing) the local school system for the existence of prima facie evidence and with requiring the local system to respond in one of two ways. The school district must respond in a public hearing that the disproportionate placement of minority students in special education programs is necessary to "promote a compelling educational interest of the children affected and the Commonwealth," or they must develop and implement a written plan to eliminate the disproportions.

In 1978-1979, acting upon somewhat less than sophisticated data collection procedures, nine Massachusetts cities were cited for prima facie evidence of discriminatory assessment practices. Brockton was one of the cities thus cited. The following year, 1979-1980, nine cities were again cited. Brockton was not.

The remedial plan developed by Brockton during the 1978-1979 school year was actually an extension of planning which had been untaken before the State audit. In general, provisions were to be made for the addition of Bilingual Special Education staff (Hispanic and Cape Verdean), and for the development of in-service programs dealing with the special problems of the bilingual and minority child. It was actually not the remedial plan which resulted

in a finding of "got better" in 1979-1980, but, rather, the finding that, statistically, minorities were neither over nor under-represented in any Special Education prototype.

Beginning with the 1980-1981 school year, the Massachusetts Advocacy Center recommended that the State Department of Education require the following steps on the part of cited school systems:

1. The immediate review or re-evaluation of all minority students in affected programs.

2. Notification of all parents of minority children in affected programs of their right to an immediate re-evaluation.

3. Mandatory in-service training of all regular and special education staff regarding the implications of the prima facie denial issue and the educational significance of cultural and linguistic differences in the special education referral, evaluation and placement process.

4. Review of all tests and testing procedures for cultural/linguistic bias.

5. Review of personnel needs, including plans for recruitment and hiring of additional Black and hispanic Bilingual special education personnel.

6. Concerned efforts of obtain parental and community involvement in the development and implementation of the Remedial Plan, including the development and implementation of 766 materials.

7. Development and utilization of non-special education and less restrictive special education program alternatives to 766 referral and restrictive placement.

8. Development of an internal data-based feedback system to monitor minority special education placement trends.

Needless to say, the Massachusetts Advocacy Center has been somewhat less than thrilled with a data-base only monitoring system. As elaborated in their most recent publication: Status Report Number Three: Double Jeopardy: The Plight of Minority Students in Special Education:

> "Remedial plans developed by the nine school systems cited in 1979 are all predictably deficient in remedies which go to the heart of the problem. Essentially, the problem of disproportionate representation of minority groups in special education derives from three general causes:
>
> a. Discrimination based on race, culture, and language group in the referral, evaluation and placement processes;
> b. Lack of adequate bilingual/766 service capacity, or, in some cases, lack of bilingual education;
> c. Poor implementation of, or non-compliance with 766 in general, which affects minority students more because of the first two factors.

Whether or not local Special Education departments and Chapter 766 are the correct vehicles for addressing the problems expressed in the first two points is a controversial issue. Most

Special Education departments lack the authority to deal with the issues of curriculum and instruction in the regular classroom program nor are they in a position to develop bilingual regular education programs. The State Department of Education's Special Education Department can, and does, monitor local system's compliance with 766 regulations through their process of Program Audit and Compliance Review. An addentum to the State Department's printed criteria for Program Audit includes requirements for cultural and linguistic minorities which parallel the seventy-four compliance criteria used to audit the total special education program. These criteria range from investigation to which all major languages in the community are incorporated into the Child Search, public communications, Kindergarten Screening, modification to the regular program, Team Evaluation procedures, Assessments procedures, placement provisions, and regular and bilingual in-service education.

Construction of the BROCKTON BATTERY

The original considerations which led to the development of THE BROCKTON BATTERY began in the fall in 1979 with the formation of the Bilingual Assessment Task Force within the Brockton Public School System. This task force was an outgrowth of the Bilingual Special Education Committee begun the year before. It should be noted here that the major reason for the formation of these two groups was a perceived need on the local

level for the development of more specific supportive services for students within the growing bilingual program. Plans were originally made to investigate the possibility of hiring bilingual Special Education staff, providing in-service and training system-wide and development of an assessment procedure which would take into account the unique needs of the minority and bilingual population. These committees and plans were underway before the intervention of the State Department and the Massachusetts Advocacy Center. (Project Mainstream was written and submitted to the Federal government a full year before any involvement of state agencies became apparant.

It was the major task of the Bilingaul Special Education Assessment Task Force to ivestigate the issues surrounding the assessment of minority children and to develop processes, procedures and recommendations which could be implemented by the special education department. Sub-committees to investigate (1) language dominance and proficiency, (2) current tests of Educational Achievement, (3) Current tests of aptitude and potential, (4) Adaptive behavior were formed loosely. This committee was a joint cross-departmental groups containing members of the Guidance department, Bilingual Department and Special Education department.

It became quickly obvious that commercially available instruments could not be used in Brockton because, for the most

part, they were inappropriate for our particular population. Any instruments available in Portuguese were inappropriate as our Cape Verdean students spoke Crioulo (which is an unwritten language). Tests for hispanic populations were generally found to have been written for either Chicano or Cuban populations and did not use a vocabulary appropriate for Puerto Rican children. Tests of Aptitude and Ability were also not available...nor were tests of Adaptive Behavior. The one commercially available system, the SOMPA, at first looked like a promising solution until we were discouraged by our consultants from the State Department of Education because underlying assumptions were controversial and the California population was dissimiliar to a Massachusetts population.

We discovered that in the assessments of handicapping conditions, tests which we would use would have to have been validated for the purpose for which they were being used upon the population with which they were being used. If the test was standardized and norm-referenced we needed to know if our students would have had a chance to have been included in the norming sample. The answer in almost every case was "no."

We were thus led to the decision that we were going to have to create our own assessment process and instruments, keeping in mind the statutory requirements for multi-faceted Team decisions, as well as validation upon our population.

The Task Force decided that our primary focus would be one of educational assessment. We wanted to know, basically, how the child best "receives, retains, processes and expresses" information," and we wanted to know, also, how the child learns or acquires those skills necessary for academic success within the school community. We needed a method to determine the child's language facility so that we could separate specific learning difficulties from bilingualism or cultural difference.

One fact we determined early: assessors who were from the same minority culture, or who were fluent in the child's language, were critical to the process. .This was the only way that language interference, and culturally determined traits which are so often confused with deficits in non-verbal learning, could be identified.

A differential diagnostic procedure which would be administered by a team consisting of bilingual special educators and bilingual members of the Guidance staff and Bilingual department teachers was decided upon.

THE BROCKTON BATTERY

The first step in the use of the BROCKTON BATTERY is the administration of two commercially available tests: The Boehm Test of Basic Concepts and the Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration. These tests would tell us whether or not the child

understands the primary concepts needed for test taking (concepts such as "under," "over," "first," "last," etc.) and would also tell us whether or not the child would be able to use a pencil successfully.

The first test to be used in our Battery is the Tests of Language Abilities and is a combination of four sub-tests: one receptive language test similiar to the Peabody, one expressive picture naming sub-test to give a general, gross, vocabulary level; a receptive subtest of sentence repetition to give a score of syntactical ability and an expressive subtest in which the child is expected to tell a story concerning a sequence of cartoon like pictures.

This test is to be used at the point of initial concern at the building level and is to be used before formal [illegible] referral to help ascertain the child's language dominance and language proficiency. This information is to be added to the observational data collected through classroom and playground activities and correlated with reports from parents and social workers concerning the language used by the child in the home. The results of this test give us an indication of which language should be used for the remaining tests.

It should be noted here that many educators feel that once the dominant language is determined, all assessments (and all classroom teaching should be done in that language.) We

have discovered, especially when English is the preferred language, that this is not the case. Very often, the necessary language and concepts are simply not present in English. Attempting to teach these concepts is very difficult unless the teacher can reinforcement, explain or further clarify the language concepts in the child's primary language. When the person administering this test in English is also able to clarify for the child in his primary language we seem able to better decide whether the child is (1) learning disabled (similiar disabled functions appear in both languages), (2) or language deficient (the ignorance of certain fundamental English sounds, for example, being mistaken for language impairment, or (3) simply educationally deficient. (Concepts not taught, nor learned, in any particular language.) This is probably our greatest reason for bilingual referrals. For example: the child who arrives from the Cape Verde Islands who is eleven years old but who has never been to school. Not knowing how to hold a pencil, not knowing the classroom mores, rules and regulations, unfamiliar with books and other tools of learning, this child obviously presents a great challenge to the teachers within the regular bilingual program. But, is this an appropriate referral for Special Education services? Certainly the child can not "function effectively" in his regular classroom program, but is it the function of the Special

Education department, or should remedial services be provided through the bilingual program, itself?

Likewise, the child who leaves the bilingual program (for whatever reason) and enters the regular education mainstream. Very often testing which follows the original classroom concern shows a lack of vocabulary and a lack of conceptual development. This child simply has not been exposed to the same experiences as have his American counterparts. Is this a Special Education case, or is this a case for regular education program modification and support. This issues as we see them seem to boil down to (1) Who has the perceived time and capability for individualized teaching, (2) Who has the necessary staff, and (3) Who has the money to develop or to buy new programs? A fourth, more subtle, issue might also be: Who is receiving the political and statutory pressure? In economically restrictive times, these questions are critical to the process and very often become the hidden agendas of local school systems.

We are presently attempting to validate our Tests of Language Development. We are administering the tests to as many children as possible, analyzing item difficulty and establishing very primitive norms. Based on this information this test will be refined and put into a standardization edition during this coming summer. With the cooperation of some surrounding towns, we should be able to develop appropriate local norms against which we can compare further referrals.

The Tests of Reading Abilities are available in Spanish, Portuguese and Crioulo, and are a combination of twenty sub-tests of traditional readiness abilities as well as some actual formal reading tasks. Skills and abilities tested are those which are included in traditional readiness tests: Visual discrimination and memory, letter naming and sounding, Auditory discrimination, tests of letter reversals, categorization and tests of pencil use and name writing ability. We have chosen those skills which have previously been shown to contribute the most to a child's success, especially as he enters school and begins to learn to read.

The purpose of developing this test in this fashion was to allow us to eventually develop a smaller battery of sub-tests which could be given to every entering bilingual child in the attempt to discover, very early, which children were at risk for failure. This index will be composed of the four or five sub-tests which show the greatest relationship, statistically, to reading success in our standardization group. The entire Battery would then be given to those children who appear to be at risk and, hopefully, specialized programs could be developed for early intervention.

The process of validation for these tests will take two years. We have given the entire group of twenty subtests to

all children presently in the first grade bilingual programs. In the spring we will give the entire Battery to the present kindergarten classes. The data resulting is being analyzed for item difficulty, reliability and validity. At this point our reliability statistics are above .90 for both the Spanish and Cape Verdean population. Validity will be established in two ways. Current first graders will be administered the last five sub-tests which actually require the reading of words. These data will be correlated with the beginning scores and we will see if there is a strong positive relationship between the child who scored poorly, originally, with those who score poorly on the reading measures. Next spring, 1982, standardized tests of reading in Spanish will be administered to our Hispanic population. Data received from these tests will be used to further validate our original statistics and allow us to construct the predicitve battery.

As Cape Verdean children are taught immediately to read in English, readiness in English is being correlated with readiness scores derived from the Crioulo tests. Likewise, reading ability tests will be given to these children in the spring of this year and the spring of next year and a similar predictive battery, in Crioulo, will be established. We are in the process of arranging similar testing with Portuguese students in surrounding communities as Brockton has very few Portuguese bilingual students. Similar procedures will be

followed with this group.

The ultimate purpose of the Tests of Reading Abilities is three fold: (1) to identify high risk children using their primary language; (2) to provide profiles to the Bilingual program which will allow for early intervention, and (3) to allow special education assessment to be accomplished which meets statutory requirements and which allows objectives for individual educational plans to be formulated

Test of Learning Rate and Method

For several previously stated reasons the Task Force decided, very early, not to investigate the issue of intelligence testing with our children. The state of the art is at such a primitive level that we did not feel competent to tackle it. Secondly, the entire issue is actually irrelevant since legal indiction prevents the establishment of a single general intelligence score and, instead, asks for a determination of learning aptitude based upon criterion referenced measures.

We have, instead, adapted a test construct developed by reading authorities over the past fifty years to the learning of vocabulary in Spanish, Portuguese and Crioulo.

The test is administered in four short, fifteen minute, sittings. Unknown words are taught to the child using four different teaching methods which emphasize differing modalities.

The results of this test give us several different pieces of information. First, whether or not the child is able to be taught to recognize a word, and whether or not he has the ability to retain this visual image over a twenty-four hour period. Secondly, what is his learning rate? At which speed should new material be presented? Thirdly, which modality seems to be most efficient for the child?

Although this procedure is admittedly experimental, the same procedure has been used with English speaking students for twenty-five years and has a great deal of face validity. The information yielded by this procedure is interpreted in the student profile section of our educational plans as how the child best "receives, retains, processes and expresses information." We feel that this determination of how efficiently a child learns and under which circumstances meets both the spirit and the letter of the laws relating to the special education assessment of minority children.

The Adaptive Behavior Scales

It was obvious to the members of the Task Force, even before research into the issue was initiated, that many children who appear unwilling or unable to learn in school actually show a remarkable ability for learning family and street skills.

Our investigations of the issue of Adaptive Behavior led us to the conslusion that, once again, we would have to create our own instrument. Although this is the most difficult and complicated task that we have undertaken, it is also the most interesting.

We first decided upon the areas that we would test. We decided upon (1) adaption to a family, (2) adaption to a peer group. (3) adaption to a neighborhood or community, (4) self-maintenance, or responsibility for self, and (5) ability to perform consumer related everyday tasks.

The scale was written, based upon a series of more than fifty questionnaires given last summer by members of the Task Force in the Spanish, Cape Verdean and Black communities of Brockton. Parents were asked two basic types of questions: (1) At which age would you expect a child to accomplish a specific task, and (2) Which tasks were your children asked to accomplish at which age? By using community standards we feel that once again we are meeting both the spirit and the definition of adaptive behavior.

These questionnaires were analyzed and only those areas and questions found to be in common with all three groups were used. For example, if a Cape Verdean family did not expect a child to be able to go to a store and return with correct purchases and change until age 12, but the Spanish families expected the same behavior at age six, and the Black families

did not expect the behavior until age nine, we threw out the item as being culturally discriminatory. We did not want to be able to identify the cultural group by the manner in which the question was answered.

Items were constructed for the Scale beginning at age four and extending to age fourteen. More complicated items for each of our areas of concern had been included in the original questionnaires so that it was possible to age level certain questions by the responses of our original families.

Scoring is accomplished by allowing one months credit for each item answered affirmatively. A system of scoring much like the Binet has been developed which requires the identifiaction of a Basal and Ceiling age and then a determination of Adaptivity Age and Adaptivity Quotient by computations with the obtained scores.

Validation of this particular instrument will be difficult as so many cases are required for the actual statistical age leveling. Another factor to be considered are the validity of the parental responses. We are in the process of identifying several tasks at each age level which can be observed within the school setting. For example, taking a note to the office and returning with an answer is akin to taking a message to a neighbor. Obviously the process is difficult to validate but when accomplished will give more information for the Team

Evaluation to consider when attempting to determine the extent of a particular child's special needs.

Conclusions

At this point it is necessary to reiteriate the importance of process to these procedures for the non-biased assessment of minority students. Is it possible to be totally non-biased? Our society, itself, is biased, requiring certain abilities for success which are not found in all cultures. Feelings that one's true rewards come only after death, or that being first is not necessarily best, or that competitiveness is to be shunned, does not help one succeed in the market place of our highly industrialized, technocrized and competitive society. About the best that we can do is to move towards a system of "least-biased assessment" in which many safeguards are present to assure that cultural differences neither mask real deviance nor are mistaken for deviance.

It is critical to the issue of non-biased assessment that all children are treated the same: if a pre-referral process is used for all children and if the referring professionals are aware of the effects of cultural difference, then all children should be treated equally.

We also believe that many of the underlying processes of affect and cognition which lead to academic success are the

same in all languages. Receptive ability, expressive ability and syntactical abilities are present in all languages. The necessity to remember visual images of words is also necessary in all languages. We do not know the extent to which one cognitive process is more necessary in one language than another and there is very little empirical evidence to help us formulate our decisions. We hope that the results of our Battry and the process through which we are moving for validation will answer' some of these questions.

We do know one thing, however. And that is that in order for a child to be successful in an American school, he must first be perceived as able to learn by his teacher. Once this perception is made, it is incumbant upon the teacher to try to determine exactly which processes the child is mastered and which he needs to master. He then needs t o be accepted where he is and taught in a continuous progress fashion until he masters these prerequisites. The end result must be a child who can compete successfully within American society. The question of which language should be used for teaching is really a moot question. It is more important to use everything within our arsensal and repetoire of educational skills to bering the child to this poin t. Anything else does violence to everything we know about education.